

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
NSC-05 (ISO) W
-----021957Z 097731 /46

R 021722Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3352
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USDOCOSOUTH
CINCUSNAVEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 0716Z

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, UK, IT, NATO
SUBJECT: DUAL-HATTING AND RELOCATION OF CINCUSNAVEUR
AT AFSOUTH

REF: (A) STATE 91080; (B) STATE 98001

1. POL-MIL ATTACHE INFORMALLY DISCUSSED REF A WITH
QUINLAN, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PROGRAMS,
MOD; HUMPHREYS, DUS (NAVY), AND WILBERFORCE, HEAD,
DEFENCE DEPT, FCO. ALL INDICATED AWARENESS "RUMOR MILL
HAD IT" THAT DOD IS CONSIDERING PROS AND CONS OF DUAL-
HATTING AND RELOCATING CINCUSNAVEUR, NOTING THAT THIS
PROPOSAL HAD BEEN FLOATED BEFORE. THEY EXPRESSED HOPE
OUTCOME OF STUDY WOULD CONFIRM THAT BALANCE OF MUTUAL
ADVANTAGE RESTS WITH CONTINUATION OF CINCUSNAVEUR IN
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LONDON.

2. MAJOR POINTS MADE BY UK OFFICIALS ARE: (A) ITALIAN
POLITICAL SITUATION DOES NOT AT PRESENT INVITE "AN EASY"
ADDITION OF MAJOR US HEADQUARTERS AND ESPECIALLY AN INCR-
EASE IN "VISIBILITY" OF US PRESENCE; (B) IT WOULD AROUSE
CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM IN ITALY WHICH WOULD ADD TO AL-

READY AMPLE DIFFICULTIES GOI IS FACED WITH; (C) NAPLES WITH ITS COMMUNIST-LED LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PLACE TO ESTABLISH A MAJOR NEW AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS. ANY ATTEMPT TO DO SO NOW COULD ONLY GIVE THE GOI "INCREASED PALPITATIONS."

3. OUR CONTACTS FELT THAT MOVING CINCUSNAVEUR FROM LONDON WOULD NOT CREATE A MAJOR POLITICAL IMPACT IN THAT BRITAIN WOULD BE "MOST DISAPPOINTED" TO SEE BROKEN A SO LONG AND WELL ESTABLISHED NAVAL ASSOCIATION AND LINK.

4. THE POINT MADE HERE TO US IS THAT WITH ONLY TWO SIGNIFICANT FREE WORLD NAVIES LEFT IN THE ATLANTIC, THE NEED FOR THE ROYAL NAVY STAFF TO BE ABLE TO INTERFACE DIRECTLY WITH USN OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER. BRITISH EMPHASIZE THAT CINCUSNAVEUR PRESENCE HERE, ON A NAVY-TO-NAVY BASIS, HAS BUILT UP "A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIO" WHICH IS MOST IMPORTANT AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. MOREOVER, THE TWO NAVIES HAVE AN INCREASING NEED TO COORDINATE OPERATIONAL PLANS, TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT, EQUIPMENT INTEROOERABILITY/ RATIONALIZATION/STANDARDIZATION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, ETC. BRITISH FEAR THAT MOVING CINCUSNAVEUR AWAY FROM LONDON WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT, PERHAPS EVEN IMPOSSIBLE, TO CONTINUE THE DAILY INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION THAT NOW GOES ON. ANOTHER FEAR IS THAT THE CLOSE OPERATIONAL LIAISON--SO IMPORTANT TO THE ROYAL NAVY--WOULD BE WEAKENED AND THUS COULD DRIVE THE TWO
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NAVIES FURTHER APART RATHER THAN CLOSER TOGETHER.

5. COMMENT: WHITEHALL OFFICIALS EMPHASIZE NOT ONLY THE LONG TENANCY OF CINCUSNAVEUR IN LONDON BUT FACT THAT PRESENT AND FUTURE PRESENCE IS MOST WELCOME. WHILE THEY HAVE NOT PUT POSSIBLE RELOCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUCH A MOVE REFLECTING A DIMINUTION IN US INTEREST IN THE UK, SOME HINTS HAVE BEEN MADE SUGGESTING THAT RELOCATION "NOW OR IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE" WOULD BE BAD TIMING--THERE ARE THOSE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO WOULD CAST SUCH A MOVE AS A FORM OF "PUNISHMENT" FOR THE RECENT UK DECISION TO SELECT NIMROD OVER AWACS, HOWEVER FARFETCHED.

6. WE BELIEVE WHITEHALL WOULD BE PAINED BY RELOCATION OF CINCUSNAVEUR WHICH IS, AFTER ALL, AN IMPORTANT FOCAL POINT FOR A WIDE RANGE OF LONG ESTABLISHED BILATERAL
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NAVAL LINKS. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HMG WISHES TO INTERVENE IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE PROS AND CONS OF MOVING A US NATIONAL COMMAND. IF WE DECIDED TO DO SO, LONDON WOULD ACCEPT THE DECISION WITH DISAPPOINTMENT AND RELUCTANCE. HOWEVER, BRITISH WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS, WE BELIEVE, THE ADVISABILITY OF MOVING A US NATIONAL COMMAND TO ITALY AT THIS TIME--PARTICULARLY AS THE PROPOSAL WOULD INVOLVE THE TASKING OF A MAJOR NATO SUBORDINATE REGIONAL COMMAND WITH NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. THEY CLEARLY BELIEVE THIS IS ALLIANCE "BUSINESS."

7. FINALLY, ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET ASHMORE, CDS, (THROUGH HUMPHREYS, DUS (NAVY) AND ADMIRAL LYGO, UCNS, (THROUGH DEFENSE ATTACHE) HAVE STRONGLY EXPRESSED THEIR HOPE THAT OUTCOME OF USG CONSIDERATION WILL END WITH

CONCLUSION TO KEEP CINCUSNAVEUR PRESENCE HERE.

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